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**Theses of PhD Dissertation**

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**Changes in the Language of Sports in Hungary in the First Part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century –  
a Contrastive Analysis of the Lexis of Ball Games**

**Theme leader:  
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## 1. The Subject and Aim of the Dissertation

The object of the dissertation is to present and analyse the linguistic structure, Hungarian terminology, lexis and phraseology, and in certain cases “bilingualism” of four new ball games (korfbal, rugby, American football, and baseball) played relatively recently in Hungary. The linguistic examination of the specific sports are complemented and extended by contrastive analyses.

The general aim of the dissertation was to answer the question whether the languages of these new ball games have adapted to the Hungarian language, and if so, to reveal and determine these adaptation processes, or if not, to specify the cause why they could not happen (so far). The examinations carried out to answer these questions brought other relevant issues into the focus as well.

Further major aims were

- to explore and present literature dealing with Hungarian sport language;
- to determine the field of sport language within the scope of linguistics;
- to explore the background and characteristics of the appearance of these sports in Hungary;
- to give individual and contrastive analyses and evaluation of the examined sports;
- to specify the problems of terminology and use of terms as part of the evaluation;
- to provide a contrastive glossary analysis of the examined sports.

## 2. The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation comprises of nine chapters plus Table of Contents, Introduction, Outlook, Conclusion, List of Works Consulted, and Appendix.

The *first chapter* looks at the Hungarian sporting life and its changes from various aspects. The chapter examines the appearance of the Hungarian word *sport* and its semantic change, the reform of the Hungarian sport language in the 1930s, the dialogue between the two newspapers *Nemzeti Sport* and *Magyarosan*, and the style and language of sport journalism. This is followed by a detailed description of ball games and an analysis of the changed relationship between sport and society from the aspect of the sport-economy-media triangle. This chapter is also an abstract of the literature dealing with Hungarian sport language.

The *second chapter* illustrates how the fields of sport language, technical language, and terminology are interrelated. This chapter analyzes the language of sport as subject to linguistic examinations, then the relationship between sport language and terminology. These subchapters are also summaries of the literature on Hungarian technical language and terminology.

The *third chapter* gives a detailed presentation of the aims and methods of the dissertation, the examination framework and categorization of the four ball games. Tables of these categories can be found in the chapters of the specific sports.

The *fourth chapter* sums up the common terminological features and problems in word usage of these new sports.

The *fifth chapter* presents the Hungarian terminology of korfbal and rugby. The languages of the two sports have adapted to the Hungarian language, and this chapter outlines the characteristics and common features of this adaptation process, and also gives a presentation of source materials about these sports.

The rules and structure of korfbal have many in common with the ball games already played in Hungary. This similarity is present in the language as well, so translating the source materials from English to Hungarian proved to be sufficient to find the terminological equivalents. The meaning of three expressions (*szedő, assziszt, minden*) require explanation, which is done in a separate subchapter.

Rugby used to fall out of the Hungarian sporting culture, thus its structure and rules were unknown to the Hungarians. Unlike translating texts about korfbal, translating technical texts about rugby was more problematic due to the missing equivalents of certain expressions. Therefore the Hungarian vocabulary of rugby contains terms long-established in the Hungarian sport language (e.g. *piros lap, sarkazás, szabadrúgás*) as well as terms produced by terminological interpretation (e.g. *összefogó, játékövezet, célterület*).

The *sixth chapter* analyzes the Hungarian terminology of American football and baseball based on the collected sources. These sports use two languages in both oral and written communication, which results in several language use problems. The Hungarian vocabulary of both sports contain many English word forms, and several English terms are used despite the fact that there are (sometimes 2 or 3) Hungarian equivalents. The choice of these expressions in the texts is completely accidental. Hungarian and English terms are used interchangeably as synonyms in the literature, e.g. *fly ball* [EN] > *magas labda, repülő labda* [HU], *interception* [EN] > *labdaeladás* [HU]. Synonyms are generally used to make a language or variety more sophisticated, but using them in this initial stage of the languages of the examined sports have a confusing effect. This problem is even greater considering that there are no adequate dictionary or glossary collecting the specific terms and their variants. The preference for foreign terms, the terms existing in various forms, and using the abbreviated player names interchangeably pose an obstacle in the interpretation of rules and the specific texts in general.

The *seventh chapter* gives a general introduction to metaphors and then provides separate presentations and analyses of the linguistic metaphors used in the examined sports based on different thematic, use and translation related categorizations. The categories overlap, the contrastive tables can be found in the Appendix. The new sport metaphors are generally witty, telling and successful translations or coined words, many of which are translations or terms borrowed from other contexts. Korfball uses the least and American football the most metaphors, the latter featuring many English words and expressions, as is typical to the vocabulary of this sport in general.

The *eight chapter* compares the terminology of rugby and its offspring, American football. Looking at how the language of rugby had adapted to the Hungarian language, this chapter discusses whether this adaptation process can become a model for the “bilingual” sports? The comparison of the common English terminology of the sports was a distinguished part of the analysis. Rugby used more terminological interpretation as a translation technique and its terms fit more comfortably to the game play. The language of American football on the other hand, translated the English words, expressions into Hungarian but not used terminological interpretation so often. This resulted in a more comprehensible Hungarian terminology, the words of which are easier to understand at first sight as we meet nominators that are part of the everyday language more often. Thus for instance, the terms *gólvonal, elkapó, szerelés* of American football are more understandable than the terms *célvonal, kifogó, mélyfogás* used in rugby. The language of rugby suggests that the lexis and phraseology of the two sports could be expanded with more Hungarian terms by using terminological interpretation, and the preference for the Hungarian variant could be emphasized whenever there are both English and Hungarian words for the same concept.

The *ninth chapter* brief a general introduction to dictionaries and the semantic change of the term *dictionary* and then examines the occurrence of the names of the four sports in various sport language and standard language dictionaries. Generally, we can say that these new sports do not have dictionaries in the classical sense of the word, but rather glossaries that are often set within the official rules and regulations. The structure, style and content of these glossaries vary considerably. Mono-, bi- or multilingual sport dictionaries with accurate and detailed entries are seriously needed. In the available sport and standard language dictionaries the definitions of the four sports are incomplete and inappropriate, so I attempted to create thorough dictionary-ready entries about all four sports.

In the *Outlook* a presentation is given on the German literature about sport language, and I try to prove that sport language deserves a worthy position within the discipline of linguistics.

The dissertation ends with the List of Works Consulted and the Appendix, which contains a part of the main documents (corpuses) of the four sports, as well as the contrastive tables of the metaphors used in these sport languages.

### 3. Research Methods

Several methods were used during the research. The relevant literature and background material were collected through traditional library research, which was complemented by internet searches. The data were organized according to topic, field of sport, and source type. A contrastive lexis analysis was carried out in the printed and electronic source texts. Whenever the adequate foreign equivalent was needed to translate a term in the specific sport for the categorisation, I used the official rules and regulations of the federations in the sport's home country to compare with the Hungarian texts. Three out of the four

examined sports (rugby, American football, and baseball) have English as their primary language. Korfball comes from Holland but I used the English as source language nevertheless, as the Dutch Korfball Federation prefers to use English and the majority of the source texts dealing with the sport is written in English. Examining the sport glossaries, I analyzed the structural and content features of the printed and online material with a critical contrastive method.

Visiting korfbal and baseball trainings I made audio records, while visiting rugby and American football I made video records. In 2004 I gathered information from korfbal players by questionnaire. The results and the linguistic data of the audio and video records are demonstrated in the relevant parts of the dissertation.

#### 4. Examination Methods

Two types of categorization were used to analyse the language of the four sports.

The first type was based on the nominators found in the texts. In each sports the original English terms either have a single Hungarian nominator (*play* [EN] > *játék* [HU]), or more than one (*home plate* [EN] > *hazai tányér, hazai bázis, alappont* [HU]), or have none (*strike out, touch down*).

The second type of categorization refers to the nominated concept and its importation to the Hungarian language. The Hungarian term either borrowed the English nominator, preserving its meaning but phonetically transcribing it (*zone* [EN] > *zóna* [HU]), or the term was created by loan translation (*home run* [EN] > *hazafutás* [HU]), or a new term was coined by terminological interpretation (*scrimmage* [EN] > *tolongás* [HU]). In each chapters dealing with the specific sports these categories were arranged in tables with additional explanations.

#### 5. Results

Several aims had been established, the most important out of which being to explore to what extent did the language of the new ball games adapt to the Hungarian language. The answer is given in two parts, which is also indicated by the fact that ball games are split into two categories in the dissertation.

The vocabulary items of a part of the new sports comply with the morphologic and phonetic system of the Hungarian language, their written forms comply with the Hungarian spelling regulations, and features only small amount of foreign words. A part of these is represented by the language of korfbal. This sport has a very similar structure and system of rules to other well-known sports in Hungary, and as such, its lexis and phraseology could flexibly adapt to the Hungarian language. The other sport in this category is rugby. This sport has widely different culture and customs than the traditional sports in Hungary. Its rules, game play and structure are not known to the Hungarian public so the original English sources were more difficult to process and translate. Today the Hungarian rugby language uses a negligible amount of English terms. The Hungarian terms here are either words long-established in the Hungarian sport language (e.g. *piros lap, sarkazás, szabadrúgás*) or forms created by terminological interpretation (e.g. *összefogó, játékövezet, célterület*). For the latter, it was necessary to define the term concept first, and then create the Hungarian equivalents with regard to its function in the game play, as well as the characteristics of the specific case. This is how the originally “bilingual” rugby could turn to a sport using almost exclusively Hungarian terms.

The other great part consists of new sports meddling elements of two languages. The languages of these sports have only partially adapted to the Hungarian language. Such sports are for example American football and baseball discussed in this dissertation. A high number of other similarly “bilingual” sports are played beside ball games in Hungary, such as martial arts based on oriental philosophy (Bérces 2007). Typically, they use both Hungarian and English nominators, and an English nominator usually have more (2 or 3) Hungarian forms (*balk* [EN] > *rossz dobómozdulat, szabálytalan dobódobás, megtorpanás* [HU]). In the case of player positions the abbreviations are also used (*quarterback, QB* [EN] > *irányító* [HU]). English and Hungarian forms and abbreviations are used interchangeably as synonyms, which makes understanding and interpretation more difficult. Another common feature is that translated terms do not always have the intended meaning: the *menedzser* of a baseball team is not its financial or marketing manager as a Hungarian would naturally interpret it but its *vezetőedző* (coach). This latter Hungarian term would be a better solution instead of the English loan word, as inappropriately

used terms may make texts less clear. The same problem occurs with the words *asszisztens* and *asszisztens-bíró*. Hungarians generally refer to the referee's assistant in football with the word *partjelző*. Nowadays, this is gradually substituted by the word *asszisztens*, which is a foreign (English) word and in my opinion sounds quite weird in the Hungarian as it primarily evokes false associations (that of the assistant of a doctors'). Translators frequently use international expressions; this is how the words *menedzser* and *asszisztens* appear more often than the words *vezetőedző* or *partjelző* in the same text. The reason behind the mixed use of two languages can be the very difficult task of translating certain terms. The difficulty lies either in the fact that there are no one-word translations for these terms, and could only be paraphrased making the communication less efficient, or that they "might be tightly connected to the generally accepted use of the international disciplines." (Benkő 1997: 106). (Let us remind you that the majority of these translators are not professionals or linguists, not even language teachers!) In many cases the foreign word forms have fixed in the language use, even if the conditions would now require other terms. Rugby players keep using the term *drop-rúgás*, whereas (although much later) the very same concept is referred to as *pattintott rúgás* by American football players. As the two games have many similarities, it would be advisable that the federations work together in this field, too. If there are both Hungarian and English terms for the same concept, the Hungarian term should be preferred. Also, in rugby Hungarian terms should be invented for the English terms via terminological interpretation.

With respect to the additional aims of the research the following remarks may be determined.

The dissertation gives a thorough summary of the **Hungarian literature on sport language**, the reform of the Hungarian sport language (Bárcei 1935), the PhD dissertation of Bánhidi (Bánhidi 1971) and the latest researches on sport language (Bérces 2006).

It reveals the process how the position of sport language had constantly changed within the scope of linguistics. The dissertation regards **sport language as a technical language**.

**The appearance of new sports in Hungary is the result of a complex system consisting of several elements.** These elements include the changes in Hungarian history and society due to the transition of political systems around the year 1989, the increasingly dominant English language and culture, the relationship that has changed between sport and society, and the sport becoming an economic power. The establishment of a sport is almost the same process everywhere. A sport appears in a small community due to foreign influence (diplomats, foreign relatives, friends etc.), then with the rise in the number of players in the team, competing teams appear. The operation gradually becomes organizational, players create federations and competitions, championships are organized. Naturally, the aim is to popularize the sport, so their communication shows constant changing. Hungary lacks fundamental factors without which new sports cannot last long, nor gain strength if they could survive. In most cases, there are no well-illustrated (picture)books available in Hungarian that could become an instrument of this propagation. The books of rules and regulations are not suitable for this purpose, they rather provide detailed and more comprehensible explanations to people already familiar with the rules. Cultural background is also important as strange, unknown sports are adopted with more difficulty. It should be mentioned here, that the Americanization following the political transition in Hungary had first have positive effects, but later become negative. Young people are more open to new games, but PE teachers and parents are less easy to convince about the usefulness of such sports. This is further exaggerated by the lack of professionals and sport education, the disorganized recruitment of new players and now we reached the starting point with a full circle.

In Hungary players think of these games not only as a way of doing sports and keeping fit, but also as a means of receiving culture and models of behaviour. The feeling of "being special" is also significant in the life of the players of exotic sports. As baseball cap is a global phenomenon and the rest of the equipment is difficult to appear with (bat, gloves, football shoes, shoulder pads etc.) this "specialness", "togetherness" and "being part of a community" (Bańczerowski 2003: 278) is expressed in the language.

Using the source materials of the examined sports the dissertation presents their language, lexis and phraseology, exploring the **similarities and differences between the vocabularies of the specific sports**. This point links to the **common**

**terminological and pragmatic problems** of the new ball games. The statements above can be amended by the following observations.

Like those of other special fields, the languages of new sports rapidly generate masses of new terms either through translation or terminological interpretation. The massive emergence of terms and the spread of these games naturally result in the appearance of these terms in the everyday language (although this process is not too fast). As the texts appearing before the official translation of a game's rule book are not revised by professionals, it is all the more important to specify the exact meaning of new terms in the specific sport languages. If this is not carried out properly, the new terms and their meaning move to the everyday language and then to the standard language dictionaries inappropriately. And dictionaries serve as reference books and linguistic guidelines to the society. (This problem is discussed in the chapter dealing with dictionaries. Mostly, these dictionaries and encyclopaedias contain incomplete and inappropriate entries about the names of the examined sport.)

The introduction of a new sport is rarely preceded by a process in which concepts and terminology are accurately defined, and the commonly used linguistic forms specified. With time, however, this may hinder perception and comprehension, particularly if the high numbers of documents with a wide range of translation quality have not been unified into comprehensive materials or notes.

Sometimes Hungarian rugby and American football federations do not take into consideration translations created before the establishment of the federation despite the fact that these texts would be beneficial to the communication of the specific sports. For example the American football term *safety* was translated as *önmentés* in 1994 (Doboss 1994: 148) and as *biztonsági gól* earlier in 1992 (Cawley–Brogren 1992: 128).

A common feature is that certain structures semantically differ from their ordinary standard use in a special way, but once we get to know the meaning of these terms, they immediately become clear. Such examples are: *célt szerez, célt visz, tolongást kér*, or in korfball: *szedőt csinál, beáll asszisztba* etc. Naturally, these are grammatically appropriate expressions but differ from the collocations we are used to (*célt visz, célt szerez* instead of *célt ér, célt téveszt, célt ad*).

The problem of foreign units of measurement is discussed several times in the dissertation. *Foot, inch, yard* – these units are organic parts of Anglo-Saxon games, but not always obvious to the translator how to deal with them. *Yard*

for example is a basic term of American football, but reading the rule book of the game, it is not at all evident how long this yard is in our SI measurement units (*metres or centimetres*).

In connection with the orthography of ordinary and sport language Kemény claims that influenced by the ordinary language inversion, redundancy and omission of linguistic elements, as well as the inappropriate use of definite articles became common in the sport language (Kemény 1975). This interaction is also observable in the language of the existing sports (old and new alike). As the source language of translations is mainly English, inappropriate capitalisation of words and addressing each other with the Hungarian “te” (highly informal) is fairly common (see also T. Urban 1988, Zimányi 2003), especially in the language of “bilingual” sports: “Ha a szabálytalanság az A-csapat gólvonala mögött történt, akkor „Safety”-t kell ítélni!” (JSZ 2009: 33), “Időkérés Sérülés Után” (JSZ 2009: 47), “Tartsd a szemed örökké a labdán amíg az játékban van” (HBSZ: 58). The lack of punctuation is also typical of these texts.

The terms used both in speaking and writing mostly preserved their original forms, and with only a few exceptions (e.g. *rögbi*) phonetic transcription did not take place. The Hungarian suffixation of foreign words results in various forms that sometimes do some do not comply with the Hungarian spelling rules: *first downt, fumb end zone-jától, yardos*, but *turnover-nek, safety-t, first down-nal* etc.

The issue of team names is partly connected to the topic of spelling. In the team names of rugby and American football the Hungarian and English sport names appear interchangeably, such as: “Battai Bulldogok Rögbi Klub” but “Esztergomi Vitézek Rugby SE”; or “Győr Sharks Amerikai Futball SE” but “Budapesti American Football Egyesület”. This phenomenon is of course not typical of korfball and baseball. Korfball team names are different in a way that not all of them contain the word *korfball*. But baseball team names do not ever include the word *baseball*, all of them comprise of a town name and a fantasy name (e.g. *Szentendre Sleepwalkers, Vác Stars* etc). The sole exception is the team *A.E 424*, which is the abbreviation

of *Alaplabda Egylet no 424*. This was the first baseball team in Hungary and its name contains the word for word translation of *baseball* (*base=alap, ball=labda*). The creation, nature of team names and all the related questions are in the scope of onomatology. Lackó gives an outline about the team names of the latest sports in Hungary in her studies (Laczko 1993, 1995).

An outstanding problem is that official rule books are created relatively swiftly, and so they reflect an immature, temporary linguistic state. This is why the rule books should be regularly (e.g. in the case of rugby: annually) revised, and if necessary, rewritten. (This task should be done anyway following and adapting the changes in international rules.) This revision phase, however, is rarely done so a situation or rule described in the field or during training may sound differently than reading them in the latest rule book. And this is something that can confuse or mislead people new to the sport.

A periodical, publication, or web site would be needed to publish the latest information, data, changes in the rules, description of matches about the specific sports. Sport federations try to meet these requirements and typically they use the internet to publish these or at least part of this information. It is very unlikely, however, that smaller federations, or the organizations of the new ball games could join forces to establish a common professional-academic organ in Hungary.

Ultimately, but not least importantly, the dissertation presents the **glossaries of each sports**. To these glossaries the following remarks can be made:

Generally speaking, the terms are not defined properly; they are incompletely or inappropriately listed in the dictionaries and glossaries. The different dictionaries define the sports from different aspects, and often the monolingual definition is inaccurate. The dictionaries and glossaries of official rule books meet the stylistic requirements, except for addressing the reader with the Hungarian “*te*” (highly informal) in baseball dictionaries. Official rule books generally contain briefer phrasing, while other sport dictionaries or commented glossaries address the reader in a more informal way often using slang expressions. Neither the sport dictionaries nor the ordinary language dictionaries give precise definitions in the sport name entries. The references to style, word class, and etymology are also incomplete.

The currently used glossaries and collections of terms that be found on the internet not always cover the complete lexis of the sport field. There is a pressing need for bilingual dictionaries on the specific sports, as there is widespread confusion in the terminology of these young sports. Naturally, the prerequisite for bilingual dictionaries is the description and examination of the terminology of new sports, which would result in a solid Hungarian terminology. The sports themselves could benefit from a unified and generally accepted and used terminology. So not only bilingual dictionaries but also monolingual lexicons would be welcome that give definitions of the specific terms. Looking even further into the future, the ultimate aim would be a sport language database that could store the complete system of the concepts of Hungarian sport languages, including the terminology of the new sports as well. This way the umbrella terms of the common concepts could be arranged, i.e. the parts of the playing field or the names of the corresponding positions.

Sport language is a technical language with certain characteristics, which should be taken into consideration when a sport dictionary is to be planned. The entries should be complemented with explanations (like in encyclopaedias) or with examples that make the interpretation and perception easier. With respect to both the mono- and bilingual dictionaries, we can claim that new electronic sport dictionaries are needed that feature the applicable characteristics of various types of lexicons and for the preparation of which sport experts, linguists, lexicographers, and programmers work together. An entry would comprise of the headword, its form variants, synonyms, and brief linguistic information. These would be followed by a precise and unambiguous definition, and if necessary an explanation illustrated with examples.

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